CHURCH HISTORY

Chapter 43 – The Church in the Early Nineteenth Century

1. Unifying Factors

a. *In addition to the political and economic factors which united the colonists in their pur-pose to resist and revolt against England, there were two religious factors of significance*
b. *Through the Great Awakening, the colonists experienced' for the first time a common religious feeling; Another unifying factor was the common resistance to the long-drawn-out agitation for the appointment of a Church of England bishop for the colonies*
c. *Starting in 1766 the Congregationalists of New England and the Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies united in annual conventions to prevent the establishment of an episcopacy in America*

2. The War for Independence

a. *When the war broke out, the majority of both the clergy and the members of the Episcopal Church in New England remained loyal to England*
b. *Two- thirds of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Episcopalians*
c. *The Methodists, who had but recently made their appearance in America, found themselves in a difficult position since John Wesley took the English side; The Quakers and the Moravians were conscientious objectors to war, but they went as far in its support as their principles allowed;*

3. Disestablishment

a. *An established church is a State church. It is the legally recognized church of the State. All the citizens of the State are supposed to belong to the State church. In the early days people in Massachusetts who did not wish to belong to the Congregational Church were driven out of the colony. This happened to Baptists and Quakers*
b. *At the end of the colonial period and at the beginning of the national period there were two established or official churches in America. The Congregational Church was the Established Church in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. The Episcopal Church was the established church in New York, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. So there was an established church in nine of the thirteen colonies*
c. *The Baptist Church, supported by the other dissenting churches, led the fight for disestablishment. Naturally, the members of the existing established churches did not like to give up their advantages and special privileges*
d. *It was made a part of the first amendment to our National Constitution, and thus became a part of the fundamental law of the land*

4. Severing European Ties

a. *In some of the churches there was no official connection between them and European churches. Some of these churches — the Baptists, the Presbyterians, and the Quakers — organized on a national scale. The Congregationalists, who were the most numerous in the colonial period, refused to organize into even state-wide associations*

b. *The Episcopal, Catholic, Methodist, and Reformed churches were subject to European control. The Methodists up to this point had belonged to the Church of England*

c. *At an informal meeting of ten Episcopal clergymen in 1783, Samuel Seabury, Jr., was chosen to go to England to obtain consecration as bishop. Refused in England, he obtained it in Scotland. In 1785 a general convention met and prepared the constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church the United States.*

d. *The Reformed churches severed their ties with the Classis of Amsterdam soon after the War of Independence*

e. *The German Reformed Church adopted the name of The Reformed Church in the United States and the Dutch Reformed Church took the name The Reformed Church in America.*

f. *The Roman Catholic Church had been under the control of the vicar apostolic in London. In 1784 the pope appointed John Carroll superior over the Catholic Church in America, and in 1789 he was appointed bishop. Baltimore became the first Roman see.*